

New homes: what is good after sales service?

Good after sales service takes many forms. If you want to determine a builder's quality of after sales service you need to do your homework.

Consult homeowners in the subdivision where you want to live about the builder's response to inquiries and complaints. Is a legitimate complaint treated promptly and courteously? How quickly

is incomplete work finished?

Before home buyers enter into a business relationship with a builder, they should be aware of how previous home buyers were treated before and after the Agreement of Purchase of Sale was signed.

Every year Ontario New Home Warranty Program (ONHWP) recognizes superior after sales service with

the Service Excellence Awards and the Ernest Assaly Award.

Selecting the Ernest Assaly Award and Service Excellence award winners reveals a variety of examples of superior customer service. All have two characteristics in common: excellent communication between the builder and homeowner and attention to detail.

One builder, for example, provides a complete information package to home buyers outlining emergency repair procedures, a homeowner's manual and how to maintain the home to ensure the new home warranty coverage.

Another builder prides himself on promoting maximum homeowner involvement. Clients are escorted through the home at key stages of construction and introduced to the builder's service personnel prior to completion of the home. To ensure ongoing communication between the builder and homeowner there is a 24-hour service

hotline.

You should compare the after sales service program available from builders, such as follow up inspections and prompt responses to their customers concerns. Builders who want to back up their high building standards will market appealing after sales service packages.

You can easily recognize builders who pride themselves on outstanding after sales service. Builders proudly display the Seal of Service Excellence in their sales centres and brochures. This ONHWP designation reflects the builder's after sales service record but is not a judgment on design, construction, work or quality of materials.

Check ONHWP's annual customer service report card on all Registered Builders in Ontario. Packed with home buying tips you can get your free copy of the 1998 Home Buyer's Guide to After Sales Service by calling 1-800-668-7504.

Tips to buying a new home

Determine what you need

- Draw up a room-by-room checklist of "must haves" and "wants".
- Use these priorities to evaluate each model or home you consider.

Talk to your lender

- Discuss your mortgage financing options and down payment with your lender

Take your time

- Don't be pushed into a decision or

allow yourself to be swept away by any one factor.

• Find out about the warranty offered by your builder and backed by Ontario New Home Warranty Program (ONHWP).

For more tips on buying a new home call the Ontario New Home Warranty Program's toll free line at 1-800-668-7504 to receive a free copy of the 1998 Home Buyer's Guide to After Sales Service.

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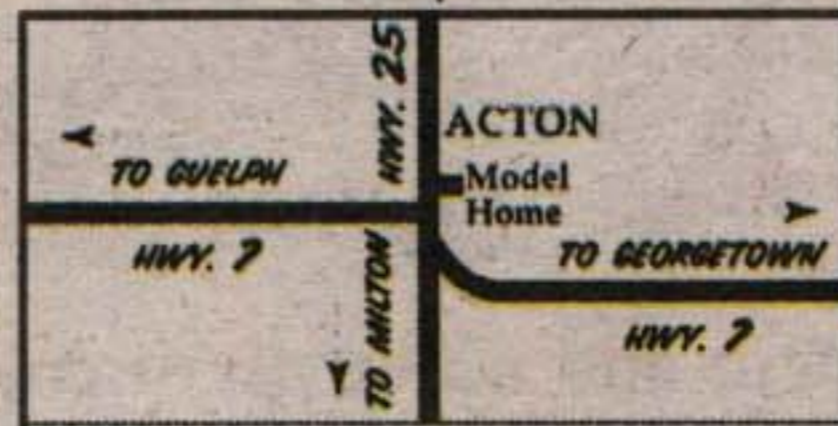
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Remember to follow through on pre-delivery inspection

When you carry out the pre-delivery inspection of your home with your builder's representative it is your responsibility to document on Ontario New Home Warranty Program's (ONHWP) combined Certificate of Completion and Possession (CCP) and Warranty Certificate anything you find in your new home that is not satisfactory or as set out in the Agreement of Purchase and Sale. You should also note any items you have accepted.

Should you find any problems in your home, especially damaged finishes, the CCP is an important document which dates your problems and verifies that they did indeed pre-date your moving in.

The CCP also marks the official date of possession which establishes when the warranty coverage starts.

Be precise and thorough when you are completing the inspection. Take your time. It's a great way to get to know your new home.

It's impossible, no matter how painstaking you are, to notice every defect. Home buyers do not automatically lose coverage when a problem is not listed on the CCP. As soon as the problem is detected, remember to report it in writing to your builder and your ONHWP office.

Lastly, it's important to try to have a friendly, constructive inspection. On-site disagreements regarding what should and should not be listed are fruitless and harmful to the builder/buyer relationship.

To help you prepare for the pre-delivery inspection, ask your builder about the video, From Our Hands to Yours, or order a copy from the Greater Toronto Home Builders' Association by calling (416) 391-3445 or fax (416) 391-2118 or e-mail: gthba@newhomes.org

You can also download a copy of the pre-delivery inspection checklist from www.newhome.on.ca in the Homeowners section of the website.